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Identical letters dated 9 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you of the following:

Over the past four years, armed terrorist groups and their Western and Gulf masters, as well as intelligence services and media outlets, have disparaged the Syrian Arab Republic, concocting baseless accusations to the effect that it has used toxic chemical substances such as chlorine gas in a number of locations in the Syrian Arab Republic. Those false claims have, as usual, coincided with the Security Council's discussion of issues related to the crisis in Syria.

The Government of the Syrian Arabic Republic notes that every time those groups and their supporters, especially their Western supporters, commit crimes using toxic gases, for example in Khan al-Asal in 2013, they go on to commit another, as they did in the Ghutah outside Damascus in 2013. Similarly, on 7 September 2016, they used toxic gases in the Sukkari neighbourhood of Aleppo to deflect attention from their use of chemical substances in the Awamid area of Aleppo on 2 August 2016. The objective has clearly always been to mislead international investigators and divert attention from the actual perpetrator of these crimes.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic categorically denies that any Syrian Government entity has used such toxic gases. In all cases in which the use of such gases has been recorded in Syria, the real perpetrators were the armed criminal groups, acting on instructions from their masters in order to diminish the Syrian Arab Army's progress against terrorist gangs, detract from its protection of our brave and steadfast people in the city of Aleppo and all over Syria, and perpetuate the political coercion in the Security Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic immediately contacted the Aleppo Health Directorate, which confirmed that there was no medical emergency at hospitals due to injuries resulting from toxic chemical substances. Experts and specialists conducted a study of the data available to them, and they stated that chlorine gas had not been used in the Sukkari incident. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances whatsoever is unacceptable.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic condemns the recurring use of toxic chemical substances against the Syrian people, including innocent civilians, by the armed terrorist groups, their masters and the Western intelligence agencies that support them. Syria reiterates that it remains ready to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its team in Syria to investigate these and other crimes. It also calls on hostile parties to cease such despicable practices immediately and to take all necessary measures to expose those behind them. The principal victims here are Syrian civilians, including those who are taking a stand against the terrorists set loose by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Western intelligence services to weaken the resolve of the Syrian people and our heroic army.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative